

COMBINED STATISTICAL AREAS

Background Information and List of Areas that Qualify for Optional Combinations

Combined Statistical Areas are groupings of adjacent Metropolitan and/or Micropolitan Statistical Areas that have social and economic ties as measured by commuting, but at lower levels than are found among counties within Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas. Combined Statistical Areas can be characterized as representing larger regions that reflect broader social and economic interactions, as well as lower levels of daily commuting interaction not identified by individual Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Areas.

Under Section 8 of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) 2000 Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas (available on the OMB website at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infoeg/statpolicy.html#ms>), a Combined Statistical Area qualifies to be identified when two adjacent Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Areas have an employment interchange measure (EIM) of at least 15. (The EIM is defined as the sum of the percentage of employed residents of the smaller area who work in the larger area and the percentage of employment in the smaller area that is accounted for by workers who reside in the larger area.) Combined Statistical Areas will automatically be created for adjacent areas that have an EIM of 25 or more. Combinations for areas with EIMs of at least 15 but less than 25 will be created only if local opinion in **both** areas favors their creation. Please note that each Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area that combines to form a Combined Statistical Area also retains its own Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Area designation.

Local opinion, as used in the standards, is the reflection of the views of the public and is obtained by OMB contacting the appropriate congressional delegations. OMB relies on the congressional delegations to solicit comments from appropriate county and municipal governing bodies, local elected officials, and others concerned with the areas, such as business leaders, chambers of commerce, and area planning agencies, to arrive at a consensus. In the absence of a consensus on an optional combination, OMB will not designate a Combined Statistical Area.

OMB establishes and maintains the definitions of Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Combined Statistical Areas solely for collecting, tabulating, and publishing Federal statistics for a consistent set of geographic areas. Hence, Federal statistical data are available for the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas and for the Combined Statistical Areas. These statistical areas are not developed for administering funding programs. We are aware, however, that Combined Statistical Areas, for example, are being used in the programs of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Office of Personnel Management.

OMB Bulletin No. 06-01 provides the most recent update on the statistical area definitions and is available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/bulletins/index.html>.

The following is a list of the pairs of Metropolitan and/or Micropolitan statistical areas that qualify for optional combinations, but so far local opinion, as expressed through the congressional delegations for these areas, has not requested the designation. The list is alphabetized by title of the larger area of the pair which appears in the first column.